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MYERS BIGEL SIBLEY & SAJOVEC
PO BOX 37428
RALEIGH, NC 27627

EXAMINER

CUMMING, WILLIAM D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2683

DATE MAILED: 11/17/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/615,474

Applicant(s)

HICKEY & ECKHOLM

Examiner

WILLIAM D. CUMMING

Art Unit

2683

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 August 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13, 16 and 19-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13, 16 and 19-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 15 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>8/26/05</u> | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.
2. The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:
 1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
 2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
 3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
 4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.
3. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

4. Claims 1-13, 16, and 19-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over **Janninck, et al** (both patents) in view of **Lahr** (PCT).

Janninck, et al discloses a mobile computing device (figures 1 & 2) comprising a first housing; (#120) computing circuitry within the first housing (*"Referring to FIG. 5, the electronic components 500 of the radiotelephone 100 are housed within the upper and lower housings 120 & 220. The electronic components 500 include a processor 510, a transceiver 520 and an antenna 530. For the preferred embodiment, the antenna 530 transmits radio frequency ("RF") signals received from the transceiver 520 and provides RF signals to the transceiver that it receives. Likewise, the transceiver 520 converts controls signals received from the processor 510 for transmission by the antenna 530, and converts RF signal received by the antenna for processing by the processor. The processor 510 acts as a central processing unit for the radiotelephone 100 and coordinates the operations of the electronic components 500. The processor 510 also includes a memory portion 512 to store and retrieve data as well as perform various operations of the radiotelephone 100. However, it is to be understood that various functions described herein for the electronic components 500 may be integrated or segregated and, thus, the present invention is not limited to particular discrete components shown in FIG. 5. For example, the processor 510 and the transceiver 520 may be combined in a single integrated circuit, or the processor and the memory portion 512 may be separated to different components"*). A display (#150) that is configured to visually display

information from the computing circuitry (figure 5) to a user, wherein the display (#150) is at least partially disposed within the first housing (#120). A second housing (#230) that is rotationally coupled to the first housing (#120); a first user interface device (#232) that is at least partially disposed within the second housing (#230) and a second user interface device (#234) that is at least partially disposed within the second housing (#230), and wherein the second housing (#230) is configured to be rotated relative to the first housing (#120) between a closed position in which the first and second user interface devices (#232, 234) are at least partially covered by the first housing (#120) and a deployed position (#260, 210, 270) in which the first and second user interface devices (#232, 234) are at least partially uncovered on opposite lateral sides of the first housing (#120).

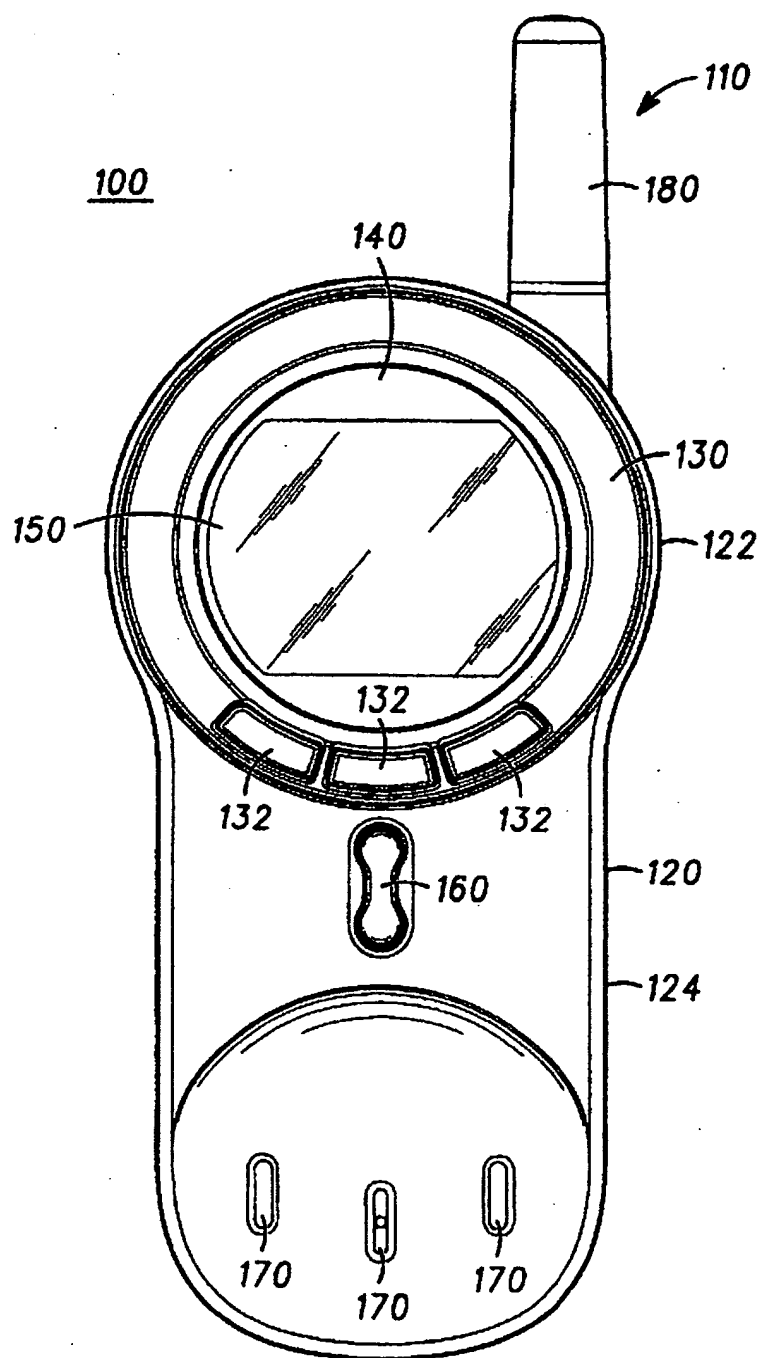


FIG. 1

Regarding claim 7, *"The preferred embodiment includes a standard layout of alphanumeric and menu control for operation of the radiotelephone 100. As shown in FIG. 2, the keypad 230 includes twelve standard keys 232 (namely, 0 through 9, # and *) as well as three lower housing selection buttons 234. However, the radiotelephone 100 may include a larger grouping of keys, such as a QWERTY keyboard, if a device having a larger form factor or smaller individual keys is desired. Although not shown in FIG. 2, the keypad 230 may also include a cursor or graphical pointing device such as a joystick, touch pad or track ball. Also, similar to selection buttons 132 and 160 described, above, the lower housing selection buttons 234 may be used for various features including, but not limited to, volume control, menu control, call answering, call termination, caller identification, phone book control, voicemail control, e-mail/messaging control, network browsing, power on/off, and the like."*

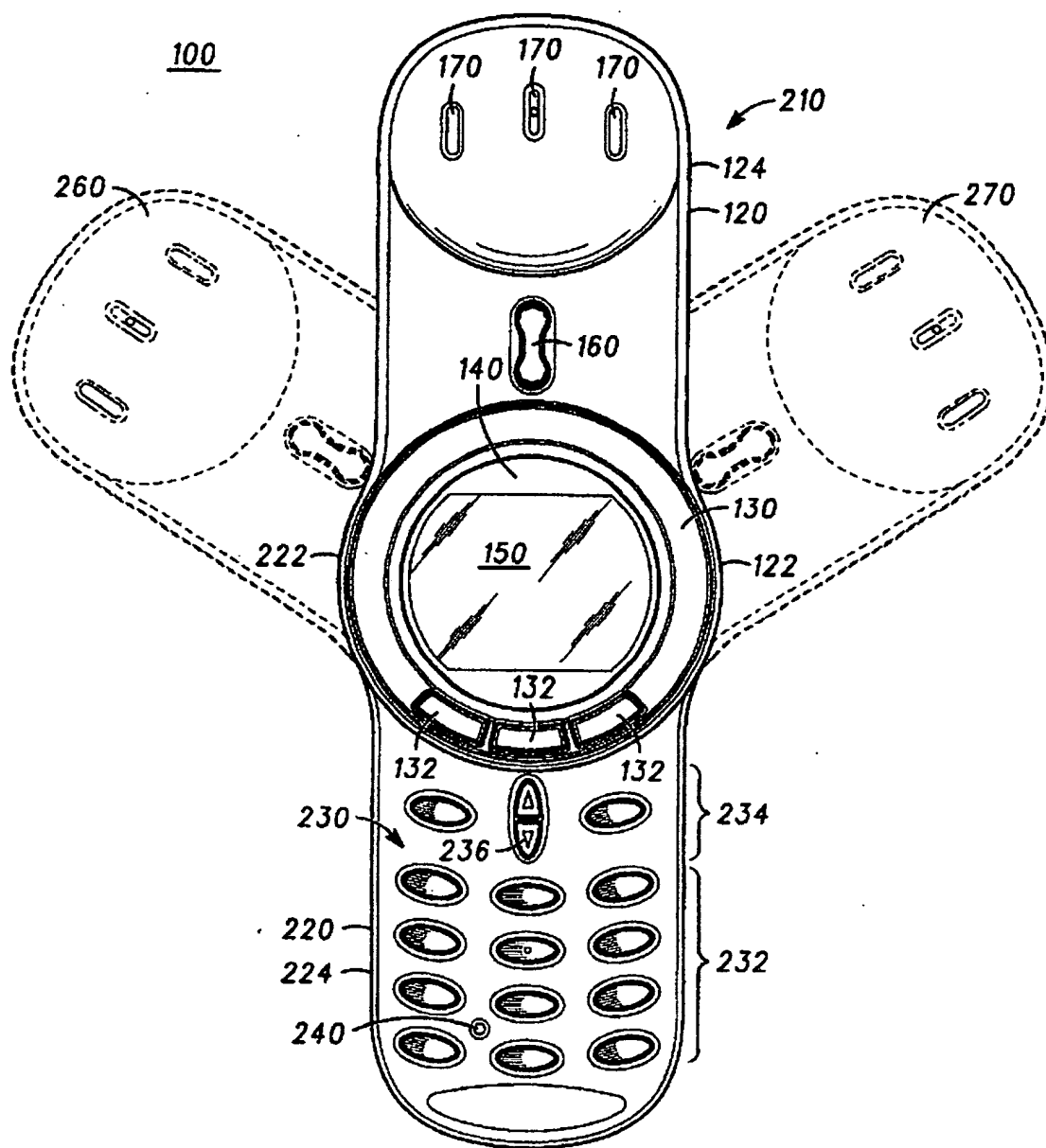


FIG. 2

Regarding claim 13, *"The extended portion 124 of the upper housing 120 may include upper housing selection buttons 160 and speaker apertures 170. Although many different selection buttons may be provided on the upper housing 120, only one upper housing selection button 160 is shown in FIG. 1 by way of example. Thus, the upper housing 120 of the present invention may include one or more selection buttons (such as selection buttons 132 and 160) for various types of features including, but not limited to, volume control, menu control, call answering, call termination, caller identification, phone book control, voicemail control, e-mail/messaging control, network browsing, power on/off, and the like. The speaker apertures 170 direct sounds generated by an audio output device (shown in FIG. 5) to the user."*

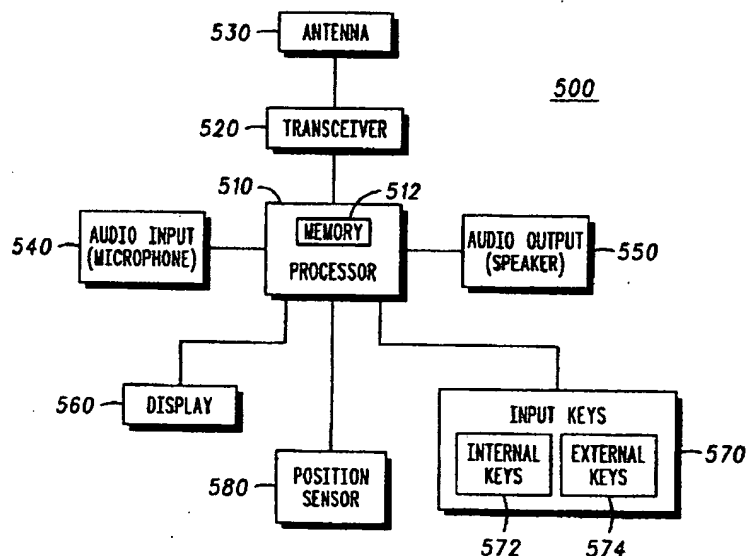


FIG. 5

Janninck, et al does not disclose an intermediate region of each of the first and second housing and the second housing on an opposite side of the intermediate region of the second housing from the first user interface and on opposite lateral sides of the first housing from one another. **Lahr** teaches the use of an intermediate region (#18, 22) of each of the first and second housing and the second housing on an opposite side of the intermediate region of the second housing from the first user interface and on opposite lateral sides of the first housing from one another (figures 2-7) in a mobile computing device for the purpose of the keyboard device is articulable and rotatable between storage position and a use position. Hence, it would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to incorporate the use of an intermediate region of each of the first and second housing and the second housing on an opposite side of the intermediate region of the second housing from the first user interface and on opposite lateral sides of the first housing from one another, as taught by **Lahr**, for the purpose of the keyboard device is articulable and rotatable between storage position and a use position, in the mobile computing device of **Janninck, et al** in order to have a single finger data entry in the contracted position and for touch typing data entry in the extended position.

Applicants admit that games are integrated into mobile terminals is prior art in page 1 of the specification. It would be obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to incorporate the prior art's games in the mobile terminal of **Janninck, et al** in order to entertain the user.

Regarding claim 16, lacking any critically, making prior art parts separable does not make the claimed invention over that prior art, *In re Dulberg*, 289 F.2d 522, 523, 129 USPQ 348, 349 (CCPA 1961).

Response to Amendment

Updated Lists of Exceptions to the Centralized Delivery and Facsimile Transmission Policy for Patent Related Correspondence

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (Office) requires most patent related correspondence to be: a) faxed to the Central FAX number (571-273-8300), b) hand carried or delivered to the Customer Service Window (located at the Randolph Building, 401 Dulany Street, Alexandria, VA 22314), c) mailed to the mailing address set forth in 37 CFR 1.1 (e.g., P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450), or d) transmitted to the Office using the Office's Electronic Filing System.

General "Centralized Delivery" Policy: For patent related correspondence, hand carry deliveries must be made to the Customer Service Window unless an exception under List I of this notice applies, and facsimile transmissions must be sent to the Central FAX number (571-273-8300) unless an exception under List II of this notice applies. Exceptions to the general policy of "centralized delivery" generally involve situations where special handling of the patent related correspondence is available. All the current exceptions are listed in this notice. Correspondence which is not related to a specific patent or patent application, such as a question on policy, on employment, or other general inquiry, is not covered by this notice.

Updated Lists of Exceptions: This notice replaces all prior Office notices specifying a fax number or hand carry address for certain patent related correspondence. Five significant updates have occurred to the lists of exceptions since they were last published on July 12, 2005. The five updated items are as follows:

(1) the Office of Public Records exceptions at the end of Lists I and II have been added.

(2) the PCT Operations facsimile number for correspondence permitted to be filed by facsimile in international applications under List II, exception 1, has changed to 571-273-3201.

(3) the Office of Patent Publication facsimile number under List II, exception 2, has changed to 571-273-2885, and the local area telephone number to check on receipt of payments transmitted by facsimile under that exception has changed to 571-272-4200.

(4) the Assignment Branch facsimile number under List II, exception 5, has changed to 571-273-0140.

(5) the Central Reexamination Unit (CRU) facsimile number under List II, exception 6, has changed to 571-273-9900.

In addition to updating the five items above, this notice corrects an error in the information last published for List I, exception 11, to reflect that the Office of Enrollment and Discipline delivery location is in the Madison West building - not the Madison East building.

List I – Exceptions for Certain Hand Carried Correspondence

Current exceptions: Only the following types of correspondence may be delivered (hand-carried) to the specific location provided below instead of the Customer Service Window.

If correspondence listed below is carried to the Customer Service Window, the correspondence will be accepted and routed to the appropriate office.

1. Access Requests: Requests for access to patent application files may continue to be hand carried to the File Information Unit (FIU) in Room 2E04, 2900 Crystal Drive (South Tower), Arlington VA 22202. Requests for access to patent application files that are maintained in the Image File Wrapper system and that have not yet been published may also be hand carried to the Public Search

Facility on the 1st floor of the Madison East building, 600 Dulany Street, Alexandria VA 22314.

2. Patent Term Extensions under 35 U.S.C. § 156: Patent term extension applications under 35 U.S.C. 156 (Hatch/Waxman) may be hand-carried to the Office of Patent Legal Administration (OPLA) in Room 7D85, 600 Dulany Street (Madison West building), Alexandria VA 22314. At the guard station in Madison West (near the elevators), the security guard should call the OPLA at either 571-272-7701 or 571-272-7746 for delivery assistance.

3. Assignments to be Recorded: Assignments may be hand-carried to the Office of Public Records Customer Service Window on the 2nd floor of the South Tower building, 2900 Crystal Drive, Arlington VA 22202.

4. Office of General Counsel: Correspondence for the Office of General Counsel may be hand-carried to the Office of General Counsel in Room 10C20, 600 Dulany Street (Madison East building), Alexandria VA 22314. At the guard station in Madison East (near the elevators), the security guard should call the Office of General Counsel at 571-272-7000 for delivery assistance.

5. Solicitor's Office: Correspondence for the Solicitor's Office may be hand-carried to the Solicitor's Office in Room 8C43-A, 600 Dulany Street (Madison West building), Alexandria VA 22314. At the guard station in Madison West (near the elevators), the security guard should call the Solicitor's Office at 571-272-9035 for delivery assistance.

6. Interference related correspondence: Correspondence relating to interferences may be hand-carried to the 1st floor lobby of Madison East building, 600 Dulany Street, Alexandria VA 22314, where a drop-off box for hand-carried documents to be filed with the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences is located. Customers need to pass through the magnetometer and have the materials passed through the x-ray sensors before placing them in the drop-off box. The drop-off box is for Interference related correspondence ONLY. Boxes are not permitted in the drop-off box. Boxed materials should be hand-carried to Madison East, Room 9B55-A using the following procedures. At the first floor guard station in Madison East (near the elevators), the security guard should call the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences at 571-272-9797 to obtain authorization to allow entry into the building for delivery to Room 9B55-A. Access to Room 9B55-A is available on business days from 8:30 a.m to 4:45 p.m. only. Documents/boxes hand-carried to the drop-off box or to Room 9B55-A after 4:45 p.m. (EST) will receive the next business day's filing date.

Customers desiring a stamped return receipt for their filing need to personally bring their filing and postcard to Room 9B55-A during the hours stated above, or leave the postcard with the filing (postcard must include correct postage mail stamp and the address where the postcard it to be mailed). The Board will stamp the filing date and mail the postcard to the customer.

7. Secrecy Order: Applications subject to a secrecy order pursuant to 35 U.S.C. 181, or which are national security classified, and correspondence related thereto, may be hand-carried to the Licensing and Review location. See 37 CFR §§ 5.1(c) and 5.2(c). The Licensing and Review location is: Technology Center 3600, Room 4B31, 501 Dulany Street (Knox building), Alexandria VA 22314. At the guard station in Knox (near the elevators), the security guard should call Licensing and Review at 571-272-8203 for delivery assistance.

8. Expedited Foreign Filing License Petitions: Petitions for a foreign filing license pursuant to 37 CFR 5.12(b) for which expedited handling is requested and petitions for a retroactive license under 37 CFR 5.25, may be hand-carried to the drop box located at the guard station in the Knox building. Upon approaching the guard station, the delivery personnel should state their desire to drop off the request. Correspondence packages will be inspected/scanned before being placed in the drop box. All requests should identify a fax number, telephone number and mailing address. All responses to the request will be sent by fax, followed by a mailed copy. If a fax number is not available, a hardcopy will be mailed to the mailing address provided.

9. Petitions to Withdraw from Issue: Petitions to Withdraw from Issue may be hand carried to the Office of Petitions on the 7th floor of the Madison West building, 600 Dulany Street, Alexandria VA 22314. At the guard station in Madison West (near the elevators), the security guard should call the Office of Petitions at 571-272-3282 for delivery assistance. Hand carried papers will be accepted on business days between the hours of 8:30 a.m. until 3:45 p.m.

10. Documents requested by the Office of Patent Publication: Documents requested by the Office of Patent Publication may be hand carried to the Office of

Patent Publication in Room 8A24, 2900 Crystal Drive (South Tower building), Arlington VA 22202, during business hours.

11. Office of Enrollment and Discipline (OED): Correspondence for the Office of Enrollment and Discipline may be hand carried to the receptionist at Room 8C43-B, 600 Dulany Street (Madison West building), Alexandria VA 22314. At the guard station in Madison West (near the elevators), the security guard should call the Office of Enrollment and Discipline at 571-272-4097 for delivery assistance.

12. Office of Finance: Refund requests, deposit account replenishments, and maintenance fee payments may be hand-carried to the Office of Finance receptionist in Suite 300, 2051 Jamieson Avenue (Carlyle Place building), Alexandria, VA 22314. Hand-carried correspondence will only be accepted, and not processed. Although the receptionist will not process any correspondence, if the correspondence is delivered with an itemized postcard, the receptionist will provide a delivery receipt by date stamping the postcard. Depending on whether the correspondence is a refund request, deposit account related (e.g., a deposit account replenishment), or maintenance fee related (e.g., a maintenance fee payment), the correspondence should be placed in an envelope with REFUND, DEPOSIT ACCOUNT, or MAINTENANCE FEE written in dark ink across the envelope.

13. Office of Public Records: Requests for certified copies of Office records including patent and trademark copies, applications-as-filed, file wrappers and contents, and assignment records may be hand-carried to the Office of Public Records' Customer Service Window on the 2nd floor of the South Tower building, 2900 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA 22202, during business hours.

List II - Exceptions for Certain Facsimile Transmitted Correspondence

For each Office location listed below, only the particular type of correspondence indicated may be transmitted to the specific facsimile number at that Office location. All other types of facsimile transmitted correspondence must be sent to the Central FAX number (571-273-8300).

1. PCT Operations and PCT Legal Administration

Correspondence subsequent to filing in an international application before the U.S. Receiving Office, the U.S. International Searching Authority, or the U.S. International Examining Authority:

Papers in international applications: 571-273-3201 facsimile numberⁱⁱ
Response to Decisions on Petition: 571-273-0459 facsimile number

Note: An international application for patent or a copy of the international application and the basic national fee necessary to enter the national stage, as specified in 37 CFR 1.495(b), may NOT be submitted by facsimile. See 37 CFR 1.6(d)(3) (referencing 37 CFR 1.8(a)(2)(i)(D) and (F)). Subsequent correspondence may be transmitted by facsimile in an application before the U.S. Receiving Office, the U.S. International Searching Authority, or the U.S. International Examining Authority, but it will NOT receive the benefit of any certificate of transmission (or mailing). See 37 CFR 1.8(a)(2)(i)(E). Correspondence during national stage, subsequent to entry, are handled in the same manner as a U.S. national application.

The PCT Help Desk: 571-273-0419 facsimile number
571-272-4300 telephone number

2. Office of Patent Publication

Payment of an issue fee and any required publication fee by authorization to charge a deposit account or credit card, and drawings: 571-273-2885 facsimile numberⁱⁱ

Note: Although submission of drawings by facsimile may reduce the quality of the drawings, the Office will generally print the drawings as received.

Office of Patent Publication telephone numbers to check on receipt of payment:

571-272-4200ⁱⁱ or 1-888-786-0101

3. Office of Pre-Grant Publication

Petitions for express abandonment to avoid publication under 37 CFR 1.138(c), and Requests for express abandonment under 37 CFR 1.138: 703-305-8568 facsimile number

Pre-Grant Publication Division telephone number for questions relating to the publication of patent applications: 703-605-4283. Questions may also be directed by e-mail to pgpub@uspto.gov.

4. Electronic Business Center (EBC)

Requests for Customer Number Data Change (PTO/SB/124), and Requests for a Customer Number (PTO/SB/125): 571-273-0177 facsimile number

Note: The EBC may also be reached by e-mail at: ebc@uspto.gov.

EBC telephone number for customer service and assistance: 866-217-9197

5. Assignment Branch

Assignments or other documents affecting title: 571-273-0140 facsimile numberⁱⁱ

Note: Customers may submit documents directly into the automated Patent and Trademark Assignment System and receive the resulting recordation notice at their facsimile machine. (Assignment documents submitted through the Electronic Patent Assignment System also permits the recordation notice to be faxed to customers.) Credit card payments to record assignment documents are now accepted, and use of the Credit Card form (PTO-2038) is required for the credit card information to be separated from the assignment records. Only documents with an identified patent application or patent number, a single cover sheet to record a single type of transaction, and the fee paid by an authorization to charge a USPTO deposit account or credit card may be submitted via facsimile. Please refer to the USPTO Web Site, at <http://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/ac/ido/opr/ptasfax.pdf> for more information regarding the submission of assignment documents via facsimile.

Assignment Branch telephone number for assistance: 571-272-3350ⁱⁱ

6. Central Reexamination Unit (CRU)

Ex parte and *Inter partes* reexamination correspondence, except for the initial request:

571-273-9900 facsimile numberⁱⁱ Note: Correspondence related to reexamination proceedings will be separately scanned in the CRU.

CRU telephone number for customer service and inquiries: 571-272-7705

7. Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences

Correspondence related to pending interferences permitted to be transmitted by facsimile (only where expressly authorized, see 37 CFR 1.6(d)(9)): 571-273-0042 facsimile number

Note: Correspondence should not be transmitted to this number if an interference has not yet been declared.

8. Office of the General Counsel

Correspondence permitted to be transmitted to the Office of General Counsel: 571-273-0099 facsimile number

9. Office of the Solicitor

Correspondence permitted to be transmitted by facsimile to the Office of the Solicitor: 571-273-0373 facsimile number

10. Licensing and Review

Petitions for a foreign filing license pursuant to 37 CFR 5.12(b), including a petition for a foreign filing license where there is no corresponding U.S. application (37 CFR 5.13): 571-273-0185 facsimile number

Note: Correspondence to be filed in a patent application subject to a secrecy order under 37 CFR Sec. 5.1 through 5.5 and directly related to the secrecy order content of the application may NOT be transmitted via facsimile. See 37 CFR Sec. 1.6(d)(6).

11. Office of Petitions

Petitions to Withdraw from Issue: 571-273-0025 facsimile number

Note: All other types of petitions must be directed to the Central FAX Number (571-273-8300). Petitions to Withdraw from Issue sent to the Central FAX Number should be marked "Special Processing Submission".

12. Office of the Enrollment and Discipline

Correspondence permitted to be transmitted to the Office of Enrollment and Discipline: 571-273-0074 facsimile number

13. Office of Finance

Refund requests, deposit account inquiries, and maintenance fee payments: 571-273-6500 facsimile number

Office of Finance telephone number for customer service and inquiries: 571-272-6500

14. Office of Public Records

Requests for certified copies of Office records may be transmitted to: 571-273-3250 facsimile number.

The Office of Public Records' Document Services Division telephone number for customer service and inquiries: 571-272-3150.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Inquiries concerning receipt and status of specific correspondence should continue to be directed to the appropriate office that considers the correspondence on the merits. Please allow sufficient time for the correspondence to be scanned into the IFW system or to be forwarded to the appropriate location before contacting the Office. Applicants may electronically verify the receipt and status of the correspondence using the private side of the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system and are strongly encouraged to make use of this PAIR capability. Information related to both the private

and public sides of PAIR can be found on the Office website at

<http://www.uspto.gov/ebc/pair/help.html>.

Questions related to PAIR or the Office's facsimile system should be directed to the Electronic Business Center at 866-217-9197 (toll-free) or 571-272-4100.

9/19/2005 /S/

Allowable Subject Matter

5. As allowable subject matter has been indicated, applicant's reply must either comply with all formal requirements or specifically traverse each requirement not complied with. See 37 CFR 1.111(b) and MPEP § 707.07(a).

6. Claim 15 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicants' arguments with respect to claims 1-18 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

8. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

9. A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

10. New Pre-Appeal Brief Conference Pilot Program

This new program offers applicants an avenue to request that a panel of examiners formally review the legal and factual basis of the rejections in their application prior to the filing of an appeal brief. Effective immediately, the USPTO is offering applicants an optional procedure to review the examiner's rejection prior to the actual filing of an appeal brief. The program is intended to spare applicants the added time and expense of preparing an appeal brief if a panel review determines an application is not in condition for appeal. Although this procedure will not be appropriate in every appealed application, in the proper situations it can save both the resources of the applicant and the Office. Applicants continue to have available to them the normal practice and procedures already in effect under Part 41 of the Title 37 of the Code of Federal Regulations relating to appeals and practice before the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences.

Contents

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5. USPTO Consideration of the Request
6. Format of Panel Decision
7. Time Periods Before/After a Panel Decision
8. Administrative Matters

1. General Provisions:

. What is this program?

Under the current practice every applicant whose claims have been twice rejected may appeal the examiner's decision to the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences. To do so, the applicant first files a notice of appeal accompanied by the appropriate fee i within the appropriate time period ii. Within two months from the date of the filing of the notice of appeal, applicant must file an appeal brief accompanied by the appropriate fee iii. Applicants may buy extensions of time for filing the appeal brief.

This pilot program offers applicants an opportunity to request a review of identified matters on appeal employing an appeal conference currently employed in the Office, but prior to the filing of an appeal brief. The goals of the program are (1) to identify the presence or absence of clearly improper rejections based upon error(s) in facts, or (2) to identify the omission or presence of essential elements required to establish a prima facie rejection.

. Who can use this program?

Any applicant who has filed a notice of appeal and who wants a panel of experienced examiners to perform a detailed review of appealable issues within a set period of time.

. How to decide if you should request this panel review?

If the applicant feels the rejections of record are clearly not proper and are without basis, then filing this request may result in a panel decision that eliminates the need to file an appeal brief. This should be based upon a clear legal or factual deficiency in the rejections rather than an interpretation of the claims or prior art teachings. The latter is more appropriate for the traditional appeal process currently employed by applicants.

. What happens during a panel review?

A panel of examiners (including the examiner of record) will consider the merits of each ground of rejection for which appeal has been requested and will issue a written decision as to the status of the application.

. When should you file an appeal brief or other correspondence?

This program is designed to allow applicants who think there is a clear deficiency in the *prima facie* case in support of a rejection to file the request at the same time that they file a notice of appeal. This affords the Office the best opportunity to ensure that applicant will promptly receive a decision on the request. If the request is filed with the notice of appeal, the period of time for filing the appeal brief will be the later of the two-month period set in 37 CFR 41.37(a) or one month from the mail date of the decision on the request.

. What actions will terminate the panel's review?

If applicant files any of the following responses after filing a request, but prior to a decision by the appointed panel of examiners assigned to conduct the review, the review process will end and a decision will not be made on the merits of the request:

- an appeal brief
- a request for continued examination (RCE)
- an after-final amendment
- an affidavit or other evidence
- an express abandonment

A request for the declaration of an interference will also result in an end to the review process. Applicant will be promptly notified by an Office communication of termination or of dismissal of the request. If any of the above-noted actions occur, the period for filing the appeal brief (if applicable) will be the later of the two-month period set in 37 CFR 41.37(a) or one month from the mail date of the decision on the request.

2. Conditions Necessary to Request a Panel Review:

- Applicant must file a notice of appeal in compliance with 37 CFR 41.31.
- Applicant must file the request with the filing of a notice of appeal and before the filing of an appeal brief. 1

3. Content of Request:

a. File the request and accompanying arguments in a separate paper entitled, "Pre-Appeal Brief Request for Review". A sample request form has been created and is available on the USPTO Internet Website, on the forms page, as PTO/SB/33.

b. In five (5) or less total pages, provide a succinct, concise and focused set of arguments for which the review is being requested.

c. File the request with the notice of appeal.

d. Address the notice of appeal and the request to

- Mail Stop AF
- Commissioner for Patents
- P.O. Box 1450
- Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

- Fax the notice of appeal and the request to the Central FAX Number (now 571 273-8300)

- Hand carry the notice of appeal and the request to the

USPTO Customer Service Window, ATTN: Mail Stop AF
Randolph Building
401 Dulany Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

e. No after-final or proposed amendments may accompany the request. iv

A request that fails to comply with the above noted submission requirements may be dismissed.

4. Content of Remarks or Arguments:

The request should specify-

- . clear errors in the examiner's rejections; or
- . the examiner's omissions of one or more essential elements needed for a prima facie rejection.

For example, the request should concisely point out that a limitation is not met by a reference or the examiner failed to show proper motivation for making a modification in an obviousness rejection (35 U.S.C. 103).

Applicants are encouraged to refer to arguments already of record rather than repeating them in the request. This may be done by simply referring to a prior submission by paper number and the relevant portions thereof (e.g., see paper number 3 at pages 4 to 6). However, references such as "see the arguments of record" or "see paper number X" are not helpful and will just obfuscate the real issues for review.

The request may not be more than five (5) pages total and the remarks should be drafted with the expectation that for a clear error in fact or other deficiency, a long detailed explanation is not needed. Requests are limited to appealable, not petitionable matters.

Any actual issues lacking factual basis, including interpretations of the prior art teachings or claim scope as contrasted with clear error in facts, are appropriate for the traditional appeal process and submission of the appeal brief. For grounds where a clear issue on proper interpretation exists, applicant is advised to proceed to appeal with the timely filing of the appeal brief. This program is not intended to be, and is not, an alternative for filing an appeal.

5. USPTO Consideration of the Request:

Upon receipt of a properly filed request, a Technology Center Art Unit supervisor will designate a panel of examiners experienced in the field of technology to review the applicant's remarks and the examiner's rejections. The panel will include at least a supervisor and the examiner of record. The applicant will not be permitted to attend the review and no interviews will be granted prior to issuance of the panel's decision.

The panel members will review the rejection(s) identified by applicant in the request. They will also review the application and the appropriate evidence in support of the rejections to the extent necessary. The panel will then decide if an issue for appeal is, in fact, present in the record. The Office should mail a decision within 45 days of receipt of a properly filed request.

6. Format of Panel Decision:

After the review is complete, the Office will mail a decision on the status of the application. The decision will state one of the following:

- . Finding 1: The application remains under appeal because there is at least one actual issue for appeal.
- . Finding 2: Prosecution on the merits is reopened and an appropriate Office communication will follow in due course. In appropriate circumstances, a proposed amendment may accompany the panel's decision proposing changes that, if accepted, may result in an indication of allowability for the contested claim(s).
- . Finding 3: The application is allowed on the existing claims and prosecution remains closed.

- . Finding 4: The request fails to comply with the submission requirements and is dismissed.

The decision will summarize the status of the pending claims (still rejected, withdrawn rejections, objected to or allowable claims).

A decision by a pre-appeal brief conference panel to withdraw the rejections of any or all of the claims on appeal is not a decision by a panel of the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences, and, as such, would not result in any patent term extension of adjustment under 35 U.S.C. Sec. 154(b) (37 CFR 1.701(a)(3) and 1.702(e)).

The decision will not contain any additional grounds of rejection or any restatement of previously made rejections. Such matters will be addressed, as appropriate, in the Examiner's Answer.

7. Time Periods Before/After a Panel Decision:

- . The request must be filed with the filing of a notice of appeal and before the filing of the appeal brief. No extensions of time are available for filing the request for review.
- . The time period for filing an appeal brief will be reset to be one month from mailing of the decision on the request, or the balance of the two-month time period running from the receipt of the notice of appeal, whichever is greater. Further, the time period for filing of the appeal brief is extendible under 37 CFR 1.136 based upon the mail date of the decision on the request or the receipt date of the notice of appeal, as applicable. To the extent that any existing USPTO rule is inconsistent with this pilot program, the rule is waived until regulations directed to pre-appeal brief conferences are promulgated, or the pilot program is ended. For example, if a request for a pre-appeal brief conference is filed with a notice of appeal, the time period set in 37 CFR 41.37(a)(1) is waived so that an appeal will not stand dismissed if an appeal brief is not filed within two months of the filing date of a notice of appeal, but is filed within one month of the decision on the request.

Applicant's period for filing the appeal brief or other appropriate response ends on the mailing date of a panel decision that indicates all claims are allowed or that prosecution is reopened.

8. Administrative Matters:

- . Applicants should ensure that requests are mailed or faxed with the

notice of appeal to ensure timely filing. The request should contain a certificate of mailing or transmission under 37 CFR 1.8 and be listed on any postcard receipt (MPEP 503).

- . No supplemental requests or arguments will be accepted.
- . The notice of appeal fee is not refundable, even in the event of a decision favorable to applicant.
- . A request filed after the date of receipt of the notice of appeal will be dismissed as untimely.
- . This procedure does not affect petitions to invoke supervisory authority under 37 CFR 1.181 because such petitions address procedural matters, not appealable, matters.
- . Panel decisions will not be petitionable because a decision to maintain a rejection is subject to appeal.
- . A pre-appeal brief conference panel decision that the application remains under appeal is not final agency action for purposes of court review. An applicant dissatisfied with the result of the appeal conference must pursue the appeal before the Board of Patent Appeals and Interferences.
- . This process does not apply to reexamination proceedings.
- . Following a panel review under this pilot program, the examiner retains the option to reopen prosecution or to allow an application after the filing of an appeal brief. This unlikely situation might arise, for example, where new arguments or evidence are presented in the appeal brief.
- . This pilot program will run for at least six months from its effective date. The Office may extend, terminate, revise or otherwise take appropriate action after evaluating its effectiveness at the end of that period. If the program is to be made permanent, the Office will promulgate the appropriate changes to title 37 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

Please direct inquiries with respect to a pending request for a pre-appeal brief conference to the examiner to whom the patent application is assigned, or the examiner's immediate supervisor. Please direct comments and inquiries on this pilot program to Anton Fetting via email addressed to anton.fetting@uspto.gov. You may also contact Mr. Fetting at (571) 272-7701.

June 20, 2005

11. United States Postal Service Interruption and Emergency under 35 U.S.C.21(a)

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) is designating the interruption in service of the United States Postal Service (USPS) in the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida on August 28, 2005, as a postal service interruption and an emergency within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 21(a) and 37 CFR 1.10(i) and 2.195(e). Postal services in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida have been suspended intermittently since Sunday, August 28, 2005, due to Hurricane Katrina. To determine whether a post office has been closed or postal services have been suspended in a particular area due to Hurricane Katrina, contact the post office directly or visit the USPS's Web site at: <http://www.usps.gov>.

As soon as the USPTO receives further information from the USPS as to when postal services in the affected areas will be resumed, the USPTO will post updated information regarding this situation on the USPTO Web site (<http://www.uspto.gov>) and in the Official Gazette.

12. United States Postal Service Interruption and Emergency under 35 U.S.C. 21(a)

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) is designating the interruption in service of the United States Postal Service (USPS) in the areas affected by Hurricane Rita in Louisiana and Texas on September 23, 2005, as a postal service interruption and an emergency within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 21(a) and 37 CFR 1.10(i) and 2.195(e).

Postal services in Louisiana and Texas have been suspended intermittently since Friday, September 23, 2005, due to Hurricane Rita. To determine whether a post office has been closed or postal services have been suspended in a particular area due to Hurricane Rita, contact the post office directly or visit the USPS's Web site at: <http://www.usps.gov>.

As soon as the USPTO receives further information from the USPS as to when postal services in the affected areas will be resumed, the USPTO will post updated information regarding this situation on the USPTO Web site (<http://www.uspto.gov>) and in the Official Gazette.

Patent-Related Correspondence

37 CFR 1.10(i) addresses interruptions or emergencies in USPS "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service that are designated by the Director for patent-related correspondence. Correspondence covered by 37 CFR 1.10 that would have been filed with the USPTO under 37 CFR 1.10 during this USPS service interruption, but which was not filed due to the USPS service interruption, should be filed promptly after the termination of the USPS service interruption with a petition in accordance with 37 CFR 1.10(i) using "Express Mail" service in accordance with 37 CFR 1.10.

The provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 21(a) and 37 CFR 1.10(i) apply only to postal interruptions and emergencies. The provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 21(a) and 37 CFR 1.10(i)

do not provide for the granting of a filing date to correspondence as of the date on which it would have been filed but for other exigencies, such as the unavailability of an office or building other than a USPS facility. These provisions apply only if the post office was closed or "Express Mail" service suspended in the affected areas on the specified date due to Hurricane Rita.

37 CFR 1.10(i) provides that any person attempting to file correspondence by "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service that was unable to be deposited with the USPS due to an interruption or emergency in "Express Mail" service which has been so designated by the Director may petition the Director to consider such correspondence as filed on a particular date in the Office. 37 CFR 1.10(i) specifically provides that: any person attempting to file correspondence under this section that was unable to be deposited with the USPS due to an interruption or emergency in "Express Mail" service which has been so designated by the Director, may petition the Director to consider such correspondence as filed on a particular date in the Office, provided that:

- (1) the petition is filed in a manner designated by the Director promptly after the person becomes aware of the designated interruption or emergency in "Express Mail" service;

- (2) the petition includes the original correspondence or a copy of the original correspondence; and

- (3) the petition includes a statement which establishes, to the satisfaction of the Director, that the correspondence would have been deposited with the USPS but for the designated interruption or emergency in "Express Mail" service, and that the correspondence or copy of the correspondence is the original correspondence or a true copy of the correspondence originally attempted to be deposited with the USPS on the requested filing date.

Patent-related inquiries concerning this notice may be directed to Eugenia Jones, Senior Legal Advisor in the Office of Patent Legal Administration, at (571) 272-7704 or at PatentPractice@uspto.gov.

Trademark-Related Correspondence

37 CFR 2.195(e) and 2.198 address interruptions or emergencies in USPS "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service that are designated by the Director for trademark-related correspondence. Correspondence covered by 37 CFR 2.198 that would have been filed with the USPTO under 37 CFR 2.198 during this USPS service interruption, but which was not filed due to the USPS service interruption, should be filed promptly after the termination of the USPS service interruption with a petition in accordance with 37 CFR 2.146 and 2.198.

The provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 21(a) and 37 CFR 2.195(e) apply only to postal interruptions and emergencies. These provisions do not provide for the granting of a filing date to correspondence as of the date on which it would have been filed but for other exigencies, such as the unavailability of an office or building other than a USPS facility. These provisions apply only if the post office was closed or "Express Mail" service suspended in the affected areas on the specified date due to Hurricane Rita.

Under 37 CFR 2.195(e) and 2.198, any person attempting to file correspondence by "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" service that was unable to be deposited with

the USPS due to the interruption or emergency in "Express Mail" service in the areas designated in this notice may petition the Director to consider such correspondence as filed on a particular date in the Office. The petition must:

- (1) Be filed promptly after the ending of the designated interruption or emergency in "Express Mail" service;
- (2) Include the original correspondence or a copy of the original correspondence; and
- (3) Include a statement which establishes, to the satisfaction of the Director, that (1) the correspondence would have been deposited with the USPS but for the designated interruption or emergency in "Express Mail" service, and (2) the correspondence or copy of the correspondence is the original correspondence or a true copy of the correspondence originally attempted to be deposited with the USPS on the requested filing date.

Please note that under 37 CFR 2.101(b)(2), 2.102(a)(2) and 2.198(a)(1), the Express Mail procedures cannot be used for the following types of correspondence: applications for registration of marks; amendments to allege use under 15 U.S.C. § 1051(c); statements of use under 15 U.S.C. § 1051(d); requests for extension of time to file a statement of use under 15 U.S.C. § 1051(d); affidavits of continued use under 15 U.S.C. § 1058; renewal applications under 15 U.S.C. § 1059; requests to change or correct addresses; combined filings under 15 U.S.C. §§ 1058 and 1059; combined affidavits or declarations under 15 U.S.C. §§ 1058 and 1065; responses to notices of irregularity under 37 CFR 7.14; requests for transformation under 37 CFR 7.31; notices of opposition to applications based on 15 U.S.C. § 1141f(a); and requests for extensions of time to oppose applications based on 15 U.S.C. § 1141f(a). Moreover, 37 CFR 2.197 (certificate of mailing procedure) does not provide for according a filing date as of the date of deposit with the USPS. Therefore, it would be inappropriate to file a petition seeking a filing date as of the date of deposit of the types of correspondence listed in 37 CFR 2.101(b)(2), 2.102(a)(2) and 2.198(a)(1) as Express Mail, or as of the date on a certificate of mailing under 37 CFR 2.197.

Trademark-related inquiries concerning this notice may be directed to Mary Hannon, Office of the Deputy Commissioner for Trademark Examination Policy, at (571) 272-9569.

Date: 9/27/05 /S/

13. If applicants request an interview after this **final rejection**, prior to the interview, the intended purpose and content of the interview should be presented briefly, in writing.

Such an interview may be granted if the examiner is convinced that disposal or clarification for appeal may be accomplished with only nominal further consideration.


Interviews merely to **restate arguments** of record or to **discuss new limitations** which would require more than nominal reconsideration or new search will be denied.

14. If applicants wish to request for an interview, an "*Applicant Initiated Interview Request*" form (PTOL-413A) should be submitted to the examiner prior to the interview in order to permit the examiner to prepare in advance for the interview and to focus on the issues to be discussed. This form should identify the participants of the interview, the proposed date of the interview, whether the interview will be personal, telephonic, or video conference, and should include a brief description of the issues to be discussed. A copy of the completed "*Applicant Initiated Interview Request*" form should be attached to the Interview Summary form, PTOL-413 at the completion of the interview and a copy should be given to applicant or applicant's representative.

15. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **WILLIAM D. CUMMING** whose telephone number is 571-272-7861. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 11am-5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, William Trost can be reached on 571-272-7872. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

16. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


WILLIAM D. CUMMING
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 2683



UNITED STATES
PATENT AND
TRADEMARK OFFICE

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